



# Sevier County School System

*Dr. Jack A. Parton, Director of Schools*

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## **Press Release**

**Dr. Jack A. Parton, Director of Schools**

**Dr. Debra Cline, Media Spokesperson**

**October 20, 2008**

The Sevier County School System is pleased to announce a partnership with SmartBank for the second consecutive year to provide every fifth grader with the opportunity to participate in Junior Achievement BizTown. Through daily lessons, hands-on activities, and active participation in a simulated community called BizTown, students develop a strong understanding of the relationship between what they learn in school and their successful participation in a local economy. Junior Achievement BizTown encompasses important elements of community and economy, work readiness, financial literacy, and business management.

SmartBank agreed to lead the effort for the second year to underwrite the cost for over 1,000 Sevier County fifth graders to participate in this beneficial program. In addition, SmartBank will support the implementation of the program by providing a core group of volunteers to facilitate the BizTown visit. At BizTown, each student will assume a job, produce and/or sell products, receive a paycheck, work on a business team, repay a business loan, shop, and manage a personal bank account. Throughout the program, students are encouraged to use critical thinking skills to learn about key economic concepts as they explore and enhance their understanding of free enterprise.

Dr. Jack A. Parton, Director of Schools, stated, "I am excited that fifth graders will continue to have the opportunity to participate in the BizTown experience. Through the generosity and community spirit of SmartBank's Board of Directors, each participating student develops and applies skills in a motivational and productive setting that is life-like. Last spring, many fifth graders as well as their teachers exhibited enthusiasm for the BizTown experience. Most importantly, students learned valuable lessons that will assist them in becoming productive adult citizens in our community, state, and world."

SmartBank President & CEO Billy Carroll stated, "We are thrilled to partner with the Sevier County School System to provide this opportunity to so many deserving students. I believe this program creates an entrepreneurial spirit in these young people that will benefit them for years down the road. Our Board of Directors and associates stand behind this commitment and are excited about the partnership and relationships that we will build with these students."

SmartBank opened in January 2007, and currently has three offices in Pigeon Forge, Sevierville, and Gatlinburg.